

CLAIMS

1. An integrated circuit device having a memory area comprising a data memory, characterized in that said data memory has at least one counter element, at least one indicator element and at least one threshold value, wherein said counter element, on the one hand, counts at least one occurrence number of events occurring within said device and, on the other hand, can reach said threshold value, which is indicative of a large maximum number of occurrences of said events, said indicator element being designed to go from a first state to a second state when said counter element has reached said threshold value.

2. A device, according to claim 1, characterized in that an event is an action occurring within said device which leads to a result and whose mean number of occurrences during the lifetime of said device can be determined.

3. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that said threshold value represents an unlikely number of occurrences of said events occurring within said device during normal use of said device.

4. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a threshold value is defined for each counter element.

5. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a counter element is defined for a unique event.

6. A device according to any one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that a counter element is defined for at least two events.

7. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that at least one indicator element is defined for a unique counter element.

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8. A device according to any one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that at least one indicator element is defined for at least two counter elements.

5 9. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that said data memory contains at least two indicator elements at non-contiguous locations within said data memory.

10. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that said memory area comprises means for disabling the operation of said device when an indicator element has gone to the second state.

11. A device according to claims 9 and 10, characterized in said disabling means disable the operation of said device when the state of one indicator element is different from the state of another identical indicator element.

12. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that said large maximum number of event occurrences is greater than about one hundred, and preferably, greater than about one thousand.

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FOI 80-76795500